

The Puzzle

TEMPUS FUGIT! The space of but a few brief yesterdays seems to have passed since the occurrence of following out-of-the-way incidents— out-of-the-way even in our profession, fertile as it is in startling experiences; and yet the faithful and unerring telltale and monitor, Anno Domini 1851, instructs me that a quarter of a century has nearly slipped by since the first scene in the complicated play of circumstances opened upon me. The date I remember well, for the Tower guns had been proclaiming with their thunderthroats the victory of Navarino but a short time before a clerk announced, “William Martin, with a message from Major Stewart.”

This William Martin was a rather sorry curiosity in his way. He was now in the service of our old client Major Stewart; and a tall, good-looking fellow enough, spite of a very decided cast in his eyes, which the rascal, when in his cups—no unusual occurrence—declared he had caught from his former masters—Edward Thorneycroft, Esq., an enormously rich and exceedingly yellow East India director, and his son, Mr. Henry Thorneycroft, with whom, until lately transferred to Major Stewart’s service, he had lived from infancy—his mother and father having formed part of the elder Thorneycroft’s establishment when he was born. He had a notion in his head that he had better blood in his veins than the world supposed, and was excessively fond of aping the gentleman; and this he did, I must say, with the ease and assurance of a stage player. His name was scarcely out of the clerk’s lips when he entered the inner office with a great effort at steadiness and deliberation, closed the door very carefully and importantly, hung his hat with much precision on a brass peg, and then steadying himself by the door handle, surveyed the situation and myself with staring, lack-lustre eyes and infinite gravity. I saw what was the matter.

“You have been in the ‘sun,’ Mr. Martin?”

A wink, inexpressible by words, replied to me, and I could see by the motion of the fellow’s lips that speech was attempted; but it came so thick that it was several minutes before I made out that he meant to say the British had been knocking the Turks about like bricks, and that he had been patriotically drinking the healths of the said British or bricks.

“Have the goodness, sir, to deliver your message, and then instantly leave the office.”

“Old Tho-o-o-rney,” was the hiccoughed reply, “has smoked the—the plot. Young Thorney’s done for. Ma-a-ried in a false name; tra-ansportation—of course.”

“What gibberish is this about old Thorney and young Thorney? Do you not come from Major Stewart?”

“Ye-e-es, that’s right: the route’s arrived for the old trump: wishes to—to see you.”

“Major Stewart dying! Why you are a more disgraceful scamp than I believed you to be. Send this fellow away,” I added to a clerk who answered my summons. I then hastened off, and was speedily rattling over the stones towards Baker Street, Portman Square, where Major Stewart resided. As I left the office I heard Martin beg the clerk to lead him to the pump previous to sending him off—no doubt for the purpose of sobering himself somewhat previous to

reappearing before the major, whose motives for hiring or retaining such a fellow in his modest establishment I could not at all understand.

“You were expected more than an hour ago,” said Dr. Hampton, who was just leaving the house. “The major is now, I fear, incapable of business.”

There was no time for explanation, and I hastily entered the sick chamber. Major Stewart, though rapidly sinking, recognised me; and in obedience to a gesture from her master, the aged, weeping housekeeper left the room. The major’s daughter, Rosamond Stewart, had been absent with her aunt, her father’s maiden sister, on a visit, I understood, to some friends in Scotland, and had not, I concluded, been made acquainted with the major’s illness, which had only assumed a dangerous character a few days previously. The old soldier was dying calmly and painlessly—rather from exhaustion of strength, a general failure of the powers of life, than from any especial disease. A slight flush tinged the mortal pallor of his face as I entered, and the eyes emitted a slightly-reproachful expression.

“It is not more, my dear sir,” I replied softly but eagerly to his look, “than a quarter of an hour ago that I received your message.

I do not know whether he comprehended or even distinctly heard what I said, for his feeble but extremely anxious glance was directed whilst I spoke to a large oil portrait of Rosamond Stewart, suspended over the mantelpiece. The young lady was a splendid, dark-eyed beauty, and of course the pride and darling of her father. Presently wrenching, as it were, his eyes from the picture, he looked in my face with great earnestness, and bending my ear close to his lips, I heard him feebly and brokenly say, “A question to ask you, that’s all: read—read!” His hand motioned towards a letter which lay open on the bed: I ran it over, and the major’s anxiety was at once explained. Rosamond Stewart had, I found, been a short time previously married in Scotland to Henry Thorneycroft, the son of the wealthy East India director. Finding his illness becoming serious, the major had anticipated the time and mode in which the young people had determined to break the intelligence to the irascible father of the bridegroom, and the result was the furious and angry letter in reply which I was perusing. Mr. Thorneycroft would never, he declared, recognise the marriage of his undutiful nephew—nephew, *not* son; for he was, the letter announced, the child of an only sister, whose marriage had also mortally offended Mr. Thorneycroft, and had been brought up from infancy as his (Mr. Thorneycroft’s) son, in order that the hated name of Allerton to which the boy was alone legally entitled, might never offend his ear. There was something added insinuating of a doubt of the legality of the marriage, in consequence of the misnomer of the bridegroom at the ceremony.

“One question,” muttered the major, as I finished the perusal of the letter: “Is Rosamond’s marriage legal?”

“No question about it. How could anyone suppose that an involuntary misdescription can affect such a contract?”

“Enough—enough!” he gasped. “A great load is gone!— the rest is with God. Beloved Rosamond”— The slight whisper was no longer audible; sighs, momentarily becoming fainter and

weaker, followed— ceased, and in little more than ten minutes after the last word was spoken life was extinct. I rang the bell, and turned to leave the room, and as I did so surprised Martin on the other side of the bed. He had been listening, screened by the thick damask curtains, and appeared to be a good deal sobered. I made no remark, and proceeded on down stairs. The man followed, and as soon as we had gained the hall said quickly, yet hesitatingly, “Sir, sir!”

“Well, what have you to say?”

“Nothing very particular, sir; but did I understand you to say just now that it was of no consequence if a man married in a false name?”

“That depends upon circumstances. Why do you ask?”

“Oh, nothing—nothing: only I have heard it’s transportation, especially if there’s money.”

“Perhaps you are right. Anything else?”

“No,” said he, opening the door: “that’s all—mere curiosity.”

I heard nothing more of the family for some time, except with reference to Major Stewart’s personal property, about 4000*l.*, bequeathed to his daughter, with a charge thereon of an annuity of 20*l.* a year for Mrs. Leslie, the aged housekeeper; the necessary business connected with which we transacted. But about a twelve month after the major’s death, the marriage of the elder Thorneycroft with a widow of the same name as himself, and a cousin, the paper stated, was announced; and pretty nearly a year and a half subsequent to the appearance of this ominous paragraph, the decease of Mr. Henry Thorneycroft at Lausanne in Switzerland, who had left, it was added in the newspaper stock phrase of journalism, a young widow and two sons to mourn their irreparable loss. Silence again, as far as we were concerned, settled upon the destinies of the descendants of our old military client, till one fine morning a letter from Dr. Hampton informed us of the sudden death by apoplexy, a few days previously, of the East India director. Dr. Hampton further hinted that he should have occasion to write us again in a day or two relative to the deceased’s affairs, which, owing to Mr. Thorneycroft’s unconquerable aversion to making a will, had, it was feared, been left in an extremely unsatisfactory state. Dr. Hampton had written to us at the widow’s request, in consequence of his having informed her that we had been the professional advisers of Major Stewart, and were in all probability those of his daughter, Mrs. Henry Allerton. We did not quite comprehend the drift of this curious epistle; but although not specially instructed, we determined to at once write to Mrs. Rosamond Thorneycroft or Allerton, who with her family was still abroad and in the meantime take such formal steps in her behalf as might appear necessary.

We were not long in doubt as to the motives of the extremely civil application to ourselves on the part of the widow of the East India director. The deceased’s wealth had been almost all invested in land, which went, he having died intestate, to his nephew’s son, Henry Allerton; and the personals in which the widow would share were consequently of very small amount. Mrs. Thorneycroft was therefore anxious to propose, through us, a more satisfactory and equitable arrangement. We could of course say nothing till the arrival of Mrs. Rosamond Allerton, for

which, however, we had only a brief time to wait. There was, we found, no indisposition on that lady's part to act with generosity towards Mr. Thorneycroft's widow—a showy, vulgarish person, by the way, of about forty years of age—but there was a legal difficulty in the way, in consequence of the heir-at-law being a minor. Mrs. Thorneycroft became at length terribly incensed, and talked a good deal of angry nonsense about disputing the claim of Henry Allerton's son to the estates, on the ground that his marriage, having been contracted in a wrong name, was null and void. Several annoying paragraphs got in consequence into the Sunday newspapers, and these brought about a terrible disclosure.

About twelve o'clock one day the Widow Thorneycroft bounced unceremoniously into the office, dragging in with her a comely and rather interesting-looking young woman, but of a decidedly rustic complexion and accent, and followed by a grave, middle-aged clergyman. The widow's large eyes sparkled with strong excitement, and her somewhat swarthy features were flushed with hot blood.

"I have brought you," she burst out abruptly, "the *real* Mrs. Allerton, and—"

"No, no!" interrupted the young woman, who appeared much agitated— "Thorneycroft, not Allerton."

"I know, child, I know; but that is nothing to the purpose. This young person, Mr. Sharp, is, I repeat, the true and lawful Mrs. Henry Allerton."

"Pooh!" I answered; "do you take us for idiots? This," I added with some sternness, "is either a ridiculous misapprehension or an attempt at imposture, and I am very careless which it may be."

"You are mistaken, sir," rejoined the clergyman, mildly. "This young woman was certainly married by me at Swindon church, Wilts, to a gentleman of the name of Henry Thorneycroft, who, it appears from the newspapers, confirmed by this lady, was no other than Mr. Henry Allerton. This marriage, we find, took place six months previously to that contracted with Rosamond Stewart. I have further to say that this young woman, Maria Emsbury, is a very respectable person, and that her marriage-portion, of a little more than eight hundred pounds, was given to her husband, whom she has only seen thrice since her marriage, to support himself till the death of his reputed father, constantly asserted by him to be imminent."

"A story very smoothly told, and I have no doubt in your opinion quite satisfactory; but there is one slight matter which I fancy you will find somewhat difficult of proof: I mean the identity of Maria Emsbury's husband with the son or nephew of the late Mr. Thorneycroft."

"He always said he was the son of the rich East Indian, Mr. Thorneycroft," said the young woman with a hysterical sob; "and here," she added, "is his picture in his wedding dress—that of an officer of the Gloucestershire Yeomanry. He gave it me the day before the wedding."

I almost snatched the portrait. Sure enough it was a miniature of Henry Allerton: there could be no doubt about that.

Mr. Flint, who had been busy with some papers, here approached and glanced at the miniature.

I was utterly confounded, and my partner, I saw, was equally dismayed; and no wonder, entertaining as we both did the highest respect and admiration for the high-minded and beautiful daughter of Major Stewart.

The Widow Thorneycroft's exultation was exuberant. "As this only legal marriage," said she, "has been blessed with no issue, I am of course, as you must be aware, the legitimate heiress-at-law, as my deceased husband's nearest blood relative. I shall, however," she added, "take care to amply provide for my widowed niece-in-law."

The young woman made a profound rustic courtesy, and tears of unaffected gratitude, I observed, filled her eyes.

The game was not, however, to be quite so easily surrendered as they appeared to imagine. "Tut! tut!" exclaimed Mr. Flint, bluntly: "this may be mere practice. Who knows how the portrait has been obtained?"

The girl's eyes flashed with honest anger. There was no practice about her I felt assured. "Here are other proofs. My husband's signet ring, left accidentally, I think, with me, and two letters which I from curiosity took out of his coat pocket—the day, I am pretty sure it was, after we were married."

"If this cumulative circumstantial evidence does not convince you, gentlemen," added the Rev. Mr. Wishart, "I have direct personal testimony to offer. You know Mr. Angerstein of Bath?"

"I do."

"Well, Mr. Henry Thorneycroft or Allerton was at the time this marriage took place on a visit to that gentleman; and I myself saw the bridegroom, whom I had united a fortnight previously in Swindon church, walking arm-in-arm with Mr. Angerstein in Sydney Gardens, Bath. I was at some little distance, but I recognised both distinctly, and bowed. Mr. Angerstein returned my salutation, and he recollects the circumstance distinctly. The gentleman walking with him in the uniform of the Gloucestershire Yeomanry was, Mr. Angerstein is prepared to depose, Mr. Henry Thorneycroft or Allerton."

"You waste time, reverend sir," said Mr. Flint, with an affectation of firmness and unconcern he was, I knew, far from feeling. "We are the attorneys of Mrs. Rosamond Allerton, and shall, I dare say, if you push us to it, be able to tear this ingeniously-coloured cobweb of yours to shreds. If you determine on going to law, your solicitor can serve us; we will enter an appearance, and our client will be spared unnecessary annoyance."

They were about to leave, when, as ill-luck would have it, one of the clerks, who, deceived by the momentary silence, and from not having been at home when the unwelcome visitors arrived, believed we were disengaged, opened the door, and admitted Mrs. Rosamond Allerton and her

aunt, Miss Stewart. Before we could interpose with a word, the Widow Thorneycroft burst out with the whole story in a torrent of exultant volubility that it was impossible to check or restrain.

For a while contemptuous incredulity, indignant scorn, upheld the assailed lady; but as proof after proof was hurled at her, reinforced by the grave soberness of the clergyman and the weeping sympathy of the young woman, her firmness gave way, and she swooned in her aunt's arms. We should have more peremptorily interfered but for our unfortunate client's deprecatory gestures. She seemed determined to hear the worst at once. Now, however, we had the office cleared of the intruders without much ceremony, and as soon as the horror-stricken lady was sufficiently recovered, she was conducted to her carriage, and after arranging for an early interview on the morrow, was driven off.

I found our interesting, and, I feared, deeply-injured client much recovered from the shock which on the previous day had overwhelmed her; and although exceedingly pale—lustrously so, as polished Parian marble—and still painfully agitated, there was hope, almost confidence, in her eye and tone.

“There is some terrible misapprehension in this frightful affair, Mr. Sharp,” she began. “Henry, my husband, was utterly incapable of a mean or dishonest act, much less of such utter baseness as this of which he is accused. They also say, do they not,” she continued, with a smile of haughty contempt, that he robbed the young woman of her poor dowry—some eight hundred pounds? A proper story!”

“That, I confess, from what little I knew of Mr. Henry Thorneycroft, stamps the whole affair as a fabrication; and yet the Reverend Mr. Wishart—a gentleman of high character, I understand—is very positive. The young woman, too, appeared truthful and sincere.”

“Yes; it cannot be denied. Let me say also—for it is best to look at the subject on its darkest side—I find, on looking over my letters, that my husband was staying with Mr. Angerstein at the time stated. He was also at that period in the Gloucestershire Yeomanry. I gave William Martin, but the other day, a suit of his regimentals very little the worse for wear.

“You forget to state, Rosamond,” said Miss Stewart, who was sitting beside her niece, “that Martin, who was with his young master at Bath, is willing to make oath that no such marriage took place as asserted at Swindon church.”

“That alone would, I fear, my good madam, very little avail. Can I see William Martin?”

“Certainly.” The bell was rung, and the necessary order given.

“This Martin is much changed for the better I hear.”

“O yes, entirely so,” said Miss Stewart.

“He is also exceedingly attached to us all, the children especially; and his grief and anger when informed of what had occurred thoroughly attest his faithfulness and sincerity.”

Martin entered, and was, I thought, somewhat confused by my apparently unexpected presence. A look at his face and head dissipated a half-suspicion that had arisen in both Flint's mind and my own.

I asked him a few questions relative to the sojourn of his master at Bath, and then said: "I wish you to go with me and see this Maria Emsbury."

As I spoke, something seemed to attract Martin's attention in the street, and suddenly turning round, his arm swept a silver pastil stand off the table. He stooped down to gather up the dispersed pastils, and as he did so, said in answer to my request, that he had not the slightest objection to do so.

"That being the case, we will set off at once, as she and her friends are probably at the office by this time. They are desirous of settling the matter offhand," I added with a smile, addressing Mrs. Allerton, "and avoiding, if possible, the delays and uncertainties of the law."

As I anticipated, the formidable trio were with Mr. Flint. I introduced Martin, and as I did so watched, with an anxiety I could hardly have given a reason for, the effect of his appearance upon the young woman. I observed nothing. He was evidently an utter stranger to her, although, from the involuntary flush which crossed his features, it occurred to me that he was in some way an accomplice with his deceased master in the cruel and infamous crime which had, I strongly feared, been perpetrated.

"Was this person present at your marriage?" I asked.

"Certainly not. But I think—now I look at him—that I have seen him somewhere—about Swindon it must have been."

William Martin mumbled out that he had never been in Swindon; neither, he was sure, had his master.

"What is that?" said the girl looking sharply up, and suddenly colouring: "What is that?"

Martin, a good deal abashed, again mumbled out his belief that young Mr. Thorneycroft, as he was then called, had never been at Swindon.

The indignant scarlet deepened on the young woman's face and temples, and she looked at Martin with fixed attention and surprise. Presently recovering, as if from some vague confusedness of mind, she said: "what you *believe* can be no consequence: truth is truth for all that."

The Rev. Mr. Wishart here interposed, remarking that as it was quite apparent we were determined to defend the usurpation by Miss Rosamond Stewart—a lady to be greatly pitied, no doubt—of another's right, it was useless to prolong or renew the interview; and all three took

immediate leave. A few minutes afterwards Martin also departed, still vehemently asserting that no such marriage ever took place at Swindon or anywhere else.

No stone, as people say, was left unturned by us, in the hope of discovering some clue that might enable us to unravel the tangled web of coherent, yet, looking at the character of young Mr. Allerton, *improbable* circumstance. We were unsuccessful, and unfortunately many other particulars which came to light but deepened the adverse complexion of the case. Two respectable persons living at Swindon were ready to depose on oath that they had on more than one occasion seen Maria Emsbury's sweetheart with Mr. Angerstein at Bath; once especially at the theatre, upon the benefit-night of the great Edmund Kean, who had been playing there for a few nights.

The entire case, fully stated, was ultimately laid by us before eminent counsel—one of whom is now, by-the-by, a chief justice—and we were advised that the evidence as set forth by us could not be contended against with any chance of success. This sad result was communicated by me to Mrs. Allerton, as she still unswervingly believed herself to be, and was borne with more constancy and firmness than I had expected. Her faith in her husband's truth and honour was not in the slightest degree shaken by the accumulated proofs. She would not however attempt to resist them before a court of law. Something would, she was confident, thereafter come to light that would vindicate the truth, and confiding in our zeal and watchfulness, she, her aunt, and children, would in the meantime shelter themselves from the gaze of the world in their former retreat at Lausanne.

This being the unhappy lady's final determination, I gave the other side notice that we should be ready on a given day to surrender possession of the house and effects in South Audley Street, which the Widow Thorneycroft had given up to her supposed niece-in-law and family on their arrival in England, and to re-obtain which, and thereby decide the whole question in dispute, legal proceedings had already been commenced.

On the morning appointed for the purpose—having taken leave of the ladies the day previously—I proceeded to South Audley Street, to formally give up possession under protest however. The niece and aunt were not yet gone. This, I found, was owing to Martin, who, according to the ladies, was so beside himself with grief and rage that he had been unable to expedite as he ought to have done the packing intrusted to his care. I was vexed at this, as the Widow Thorneycroft, her *protegee*, and the Rev. Mr. Wishart, accompanied by a solicitor, were shortly expected; and it was desirable that a meeting of the antagonistic parties should be avoided. I descended to the lower regions to remonstrate with and hurry Martin, and found, as I feared, that his former evil habits had returned upon him. It was not yet twelve o'clock, and he was already partially intoxicated, and pale, trembling, and nervous from the effects, it was clear to me, of the previous night's debauch.

“Your mistress is grossly deceived in you!” I angrily exclaimed; “and if my advice were taken, you would be turned out of the house at once without a character. There, don't attempt to bamboozle me with that nonsense; I've seen fellows crying drunk before now.”

He stammered out some broken excuses, to which I very impatiently listened; and so thoroughly muddled did his brain appear, that he either could not or would not comprehend the possibility of Mrs. Allerton and her children being turned out of house and home, as he expressed it, and over and over again asked me if nothing could yet be done to prevent it. I was completely disgusted with the fellow, and sharply bidding him hasten his preparations for departure, rejoined the ladies, who were by this time assembled in the back drawing room, ready shawled and bonneted for their journey. It was a sad sight. Rosamond Stewart's splendid face was shadowed by deep and bitter grief, borne, it is true, with pride and fortitude; but it was easy to see its throbbing pulsations through all the forced calmness of the surface. Her aunt, of a weaker nature, sobbed loudly in the fullness of her grief; and the children, shrinking instinctively in the chilling atmosphere of a great calamity, clung, trembling and half terrified, the eldest especially, to their mother. I did not insult them with phrases of condolence, but turned the conversation, if such it could be called, upon their future home and prospects in Switzerland. Some time had thus elapsed. When my combative propensities were suddenly aroused by the loud dash of a carriage to the door, and the peremptory rat-tat-tat which followed. I felt my cheek flame as I said: "They demand admittance as if in possession of an assured, decided right. It is not yet too late to refuse possession, and take the chances of the law's uncertainty."

Mrs. Allerton shook her head with decisive meaning. "I could not bear it," she said in a tone of sorrowful gentleness. "But I trust we shall not be intruded upon."

I hurried out of the apartment, and met the triumphant claimants. I explained the cause of the delay, and suggested that Mrs. Thorneycroft and her friends could amuse themselves in the garden whilst the solicitor and I ran over the inventory of the chief valuables to be surrendered together. This was agreed to. A minute or two before the conclusion of this necessary formality, I received a message from the ladies, expressive of a wish to be gone at once, if I would escort them to the hotel; and Martin, who was nowhere to be found, could follow. I hastened to comply with their wishes; and we were just about to issue from the front drawing room, into which we had passed through the folding doors, when we were confronted by the widow, and her party, who had just reached the landing of the great staircase. We drew back in silence. The mutual confusion into which we were thrown caused a momentary hesitation only, and we were passing on when the butler suddenly appeared.

"A gentleman," he said, "an officer, is at the door, who wishes to see a Miss Maria Emsbury, formerly of Swindon."

I stared at the man, discerned a strange expression in his face, and it glanced across me at the same moment that I had heard no knock at the door.

"See Miss Emsbury!" exclaimed the Widow Thorneycroft, recovering her speech: "There is no such person here!"

"Pardon me, madam," I cried, catching eagerly at the interruption, as a drowning man is said to do at a straw: "This young person *was* at least Miss Embury. Desire the officer to walk up." The butler vanished instantly, and we all huddled back disorderly into the drawing room, someone

closing the door after us. I felt the grasp of Mrs. Allerton's arm tighten convulsively round mine, and her breath I heard came quick and short. I was hardly less agitated myself .

Steps—slow and deliberate steps—were presently heard ascending the stairs, the door opened, and in walked a gentleman in the uniform of a yeomanry officer, whom at the first glance I could have sworn to be the deceased Mr. Henry Allerton. A slight exclamation of terror escaped Mrs. Allerton, followed by a loud hysterical scream from the Swindon young woman, as she staggered forward towards the stranger, exclaiming; “Oh merciful God!—my husband!” and then fell, overcome with emotion, in his outstretched arms.

“Yes,” said the Rev. Mr. Wishart promptly, “that is certainly the gentleman I united to Maria Emsbury. What can be the meaning of this scene?”

“Is that sufficient, Mr. Sharp?” exclaimed the officer in a voice that removed all doubt.

“Quite, quite,” I shouted— “more than enough!”

“Very well, then,” said William Martin, dashing off his black curling wig, removing his whiskers of the same colour, and giving his own light, but now cropped, head of hair and clean-shaved cheeks to view. “Now, then, send for the police, and let them transport me; I richly merit it. I married this young woman in a false name; I robbed her of her money, and I deserve the hulks, if anybody ever did.”

You might have heard a pin drop in the apartment whilst the repentant rascal thus spoke; and when he ceased, Mrs. Allerton, unable to bear up against the tumultuous emotion which his words excited, sank without breath or sensation upon a sofa. Assistance was summoned; and whilst the as yet imperfectly-informed servants were running from one to another with restoratives, I had leisure to look around. The Widow Thorneycroft, who had dropped into a chair, sat gazing in bewildered dismay upon the stranger, who still held her lately-discovered niece-in-law in his arms; and I could see the hot perspiration which had gathered on her brow run in large drops down the white channels which they traced through the thick rouge of her cheeks. But the reader's fancy will supply the best image of this unexpected and extraordinary scene. I cleared the house of intruders and visitors as speedily as possible, well assured that matters would now adjust themselves without difficulty.

And so it proved. Martin was not sent to the hulks, though no question that he amply deserved a punishment as great as that. The self-sacrifice, as he deemed it, which he at last made, pleaded for him, and so did his pretty-looking wife; and the upshot was, that the mistaken bride's dowry was restored, with something over, and that a tavern was taken for them in Piccadilly—the White Bear I think it was—where they lived comfortably and happily, I have heard, for a long time, and having considerably added to their capital, removed to a hotel of a higher grade in the City, where they now reside. It was not at all surprising that the clergyman and others had been deceived. The disguise, and Martin's imitative talent, might have misled persons on their guard, much more men unsuspecting of deception. The cast in the eyes, as well as a general resemblance of features, also of course greatly aided the imposture.

Of Mrs. Rosamond Allerton, I have only to say, for it is all I know, that she is rich, unwedded, and still splendidly beautiful, though of course somewhat *passée* compared with herself twenty years since. Happy, too, I have no doubt she is, judging from the placid brightness of her aspect the last time I saw her beneath the transept of the Crystal Palace, on the occasion of its opening by the Queen. I remember wondering at the time if she often recalled to mind the passage in her life which I have here recorded.

From *Leaves from the Diary of a Law-Clerk* by the Author of "Recollections of a Detective Police Officer," &c. London: J.C. Brown & Co., 1857.